

Sessions at the Nordic Bronze Age symposium 11-14th of June 2025 at the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger

Complex migrations: movement, gender and regionality in the Nordic Bronze Age

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The last decade, scientific analysis of ancient DNA and various isotopes have brought new and perplexing information especially regarding gendered mobility in Bronze Age contexts. While some of the initial interpretations of such data have been criticized for reproducing simplified views of men's and women's roles in society, we now experience more detailed exploration into gender and migration, facilitating novel and intriguing insights.

This session proposes to nuance the view of the Bronze Age in ways that acknowledge the complexity of gender as well as migration processes. We invite perspectives that challenge stereotypical images of gendered migrations and regionality in the Nordic Bronze Age and explore nuanced understandings of how and why people move and migrate over short and long distances. We want to ask how gendered mobility creates, influences, and changes innovation and regionality and thereby to obtain a better understanding of the Nordic Bronze Age.

Meetings through metal - Deposited metalwork in Nordic Bronze Age Landscapes

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Bronze Age hoards were for a long time primarily studied as proxies for building typochronologies and for mapping regional wealth and political centra through time and space. Perspectives have widened over the last decades, and hoards and metalwork deposited in the landscape are now explored as the remains of complex, deliberate actions, with potential to inform about a variety of areas of Bronze Age life. Actions that can provide clues to landscape perception, metalwork use before the point of deposition, beliefs and world-views, inter-cultural meetings and the approach to foreign goods, ritual practice, economy and circulation and hoarding of objects of various ages and origins. In short, deposited metal (and other materials) opens windows to many different aspects of Bronze Age society.

This session calls for papers dealing with Bronze Age metalwork depositions, exploring their entanglements in past and present realities. Themes include, but are not limited to: the inter-relationship between metal and non-metal objects in hoards; between hoards and their landscape setting; between the hoards and depositions and other remains including transport routes or other places of importance; between local and foreign objects in hoarded assemblages; between complete and fragmented in hoarded metal; between the deposition and the presumed authors of its deposition; between depositions and different waters and land formations; and between hoard finds and modern land-use and metal detecting.

We look forward to meeting and discussing case studies, interpretations and theoretical reflections about depositions and hoarding, exploring current and future perspectives of deposition studies in Nordic Bronze Age archaeology.

Nordic Bronze Ages

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The concept of a homogenous Scandinavian Bronze Age society, characterized by a hierarchical social organization based on wealth and bronzes, has long served as a reference point for archaeological research on the subject. In this session we aim to challenge this Bronze Age homogeneity in relation to both space and time. We want to explore the possibility of several co-existing Nordic Bronze Ages, with the purpose of understanding the distribution and chronology of the vast and varied archaeological record of the Nordic area. How do we explore Bronze Age movements, contacts, networks, and social organization directly based on the archaeological material at hand, rather than in relation to the norm set by the south Scandinavian Bronze Age paradigm. This enables possibilities of studying intersections between archaeological materials that change in relation to both time and space.

We encourage papers that move beyond the center - periphery dichotomy in Bronze Age research by focusing on regional and inter-regional developments. This includes perspectives on; 1) change in relation to both time and space. 2) the results, materials and patterns unfolded and produced by contract archaeology, and 3) mobility and networks that challenge the traditional notions of long-distance travel.

Windblown and carried by the waves

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A journey following the natural flow of the North Sea would take one from Denmark to Great Britain, then to Ireland, subsequently to the coast of the Netherlands, and finally back to Denmark. It seems reasonable to posit that this current existed during the Bronze Age and that it significantly influenced maritime journeys and, consequently, sea routes. It is therefore postulated that this would have had an impact on the development of contacts, exchanges and networks. It can be reasonably assumed that the transfer of information, opinions and world views was equally fluid, which must also have had an impact on everyday practices such as burial customs.

The transition from inhumation to cremation, the precise spread and motivation of which remain a subject of ongoing debate among scholars, represents a central area of investigation. The occurrence of extremely early cremations in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as the earliest known continental cremations in coastal areas, suggests a possible link. Nevertheless, a number of alternative scenarios have been put forward. An interdisciplinary approach allows for the formulation of reconstructions on land and sea. The integration of these approaches represents a significant challenge, which is why this session has been designed to facilitate focused discussion on this topic.

The principal objective of this session is to initiate a discussion and encourage all participants to adopt a flexible approach. We welcome presentations on this topic from all perspectives, particularly those that embrace an interdisciplinary approach. Furthermore, we are interested in spatial analyses that employ modelling as a primary approach, in addition to other methodologies.